

1      **CLAIMS**

2      What is claimed is:

3      **1.** A method comprising:

4                 verifying that a first application is authorized to set an initial range for a  
5                 controlled parameter setting;

6                 if authorized, allowing the first application to set an initial range for the  
7                 controlled parameter setting; and

8                 subsequently, allowing at least a second application to modify the  
9                 controlled parameter setting within the initial range set by the first application.

10         **2.** A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first application is  
11                 verified based on a first security code.

12         **3.** A method as recited in claim 2, wherein the first security code is at  
13                 least partially encrypted.

14         **4.** A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first application is  
15                 verified based at least partially on memory location information associated with a  
16                 verifying function.

17         **5.** A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the memory location  
18                 information associated with the verifying function defines memory location within  
19                 a read only memory (ROM).

1       6. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the initial range includes at  
2 least a maximum controlled parameter setting, and the second application is not  
3 allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting beyond the maximum  
4 controlled parameter setting.

5  
6       7. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the initial range includes at  
7 least a minimum controlled parameter setting, and the second application is not  
8 allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting below the minimum controlled  
9 parameter setting.

10  
11      8. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:  
12             verifying that the second application is authorized to modify a current range  
13 for the controlled parameter setting;  
14             if authorized, allowing the second application to modify the current range  
15 for the controlled parameter setting; and  
16             subsequently, allowing at least a third application to modify the controlled  
17 parameter setting within the current range as modified by the second application.

18  
19      9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the second application is  
20 verified based on a second security code.

21  
22      10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein the second security code is  
23 at least partially encrypted.

1           **11.** A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the second application is  
2 verified based at least partially on memory location information associated with a  
3 verifying function.

4

5           **12.** A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the memory location  
6 information associated with the verifying function defines memory location within  
7 a read only memory (ROM)

8

9           **13.** A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the current range includes  
10 at least a maximum controlled parameter setting, and the third application is not  
11 allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting beyond the maximum  
12 controlled parameter setting.

13

14           **14.** A method as recited in claim 8, wherein the current range includes  
15 at least a minimum controlled parameter setting, and the third application is not  
16 allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting below the minimum controlled  
17 parameter setting.

18

19           **15.** A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the controlled parameter  
20 setting is selected from a group of settings comprising an audio volume control  
21 parameter, an audio tone control parameter, an illumination control parameter, a  
22 visual display control parameter, a temperature control parameter, a  
23 communication access control parameter, a peripheral device control parameter, a  
24 vehicle control parameter, and an environment control parameter.

1        16. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein:

2                verifying that the first application is authorized to set the initial range for  
3                the controlled parameter setting further includes using a first verifier; and

4                verifying that the second application is authorized to modify the current  
5                range for the controlled parameter setting further includes using a second verifier,

6                wherein the first verifier and the second verifier are operatively configured  
7                in a serial arrangement, and the first verifier is independently responsive to a first  
8                security code and the second verifier is independently responsive to a second  
9                security code.

10  
11        17. A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the first verifier is  
12                provided by a first entity and the second verifier that is provided by a second  
13                entity.

14  
15        18. A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the first security code and  
16                the second security code are the same.

17  
18        19. A method as recited in claim 16, wherein the first security code is  
19                provided by a first entity and the second security code is provided by a second  
20                entity.

1           **20.** A method as recited in claim 1, wherein verifying that the first  
2 application is authorized to set the initial range for the controlled parameter setting  
3 further includes using at least one verifier selected from a group comprising at  
4 least a first verifier and a second verifier.

5  
6           **21.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 8, wherein  
7 verifying that the second application is authorized to set the initial range for the  
8 controlled parameter setting further includes using at least one verifier selected  
9 from a group comprising at least a first verifier and a second verifier.

10  
11          **22.** A computer-readable medium having computer-executable  
12 instructions for performing steps comprising:

13           verifying that a first application is authorized to set an initial range for a  
14 controlled parameter setting;

15           if authorized, allowing the first application to set an initial range for the  
16 controlled parameter setting; and

17           subsequently, allowing at least a second application to modify the  
18 controlled parameter setting within the initial range set by the first application.

19  
20          **23.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the  
21 first application is verified based on a first security code.

22  
23          **24.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 23, wherein the  
24 first security code is at least partially encrypted.

1           25. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the  
2 first application is verified based at least partially on memory location information  
3 associated with a verifying function.

4

5           26. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 25, wherein the  
6 memory location information associated with the verifying function defines  
7 memory location within a read only memory (ROM).

8

9           27. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the  
10 initial range includes at least a maximum controlled parameter setting, and the  
11 second application is not allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting  
12 beyond the maximum controlled parameter setting.

13

14           28. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the  
15 initial range includes at least a minimum controlled parameter setting, and the  
16 second application is not allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting below  
17 the minimum controlled parameter setting.

18

19           29. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, having  
20 computer-executable instructions for performing steps further comprising:

21                 verifying that the second application is authorized to modify a current range  
22 for the controlled parameter setting;

23                 if authorized, allowing the second application to modify the current range  
24 for the controlled parameter setting; and

1 subsequently, allowing at least a third application to modify the controlled  
2 parameter setting within the current range as modified by the second application.

3  
4 30. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein the  
5 second application is verified based on a second security code.

6  
7 31. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 30, wherein the  
8 second security code is at least partially encrypted.

9  
10 32. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein the  
11 second application is verified based at least partially on memory location  
12 information associated with a verifying function.

13  
14 33. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 32, wherein the  
15 memory location information associated with the verifying function defines  
16 memory location within a read only memory (ROM).

17  
18 34. A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein the  
19 current range includes at least a maximum controlled parameter setting, and the  
20 third application is not allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting beyond  
21 the maximum controlled parameter setting.

1           **35.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein the  
2 current range includes at least a minimum controlled parameter setting, and the  
3 third application is not allowed to modify the controlled parameter setting below  
4 the minimum controlled parameter setting.

5

6           **36.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein the  
7 controlled parameter setting is selected from a group of settings comprising an  
8 audio volume control parameter, an audio tone control parameter, an illumination  
9 control parameter, a visual display control parameter, a temperature control  
10 parameter, a communication access control parameter, a peripheral device control  
11 parameter, a vehicle control parameter, and an environment control parameter.

12

13           **37.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein:  
14                 verifying that the first application is authorized to set the initial range for  
15 the controlled parameter setting further includes using a first verifier; and  
16                 verifying that the second application is authorized to modify the current  
17 range for the controlled parameter setting further includes using a second verifier,  
18                 wherein the first verifier and the second verifier are operatively configured  
19 in a serial arrangement, and the first verifier is independently responsive to a first  
20 security code and the second verifier is independently responsive to a second  
21 security code.

22

23           **38.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 37, wherein the  
24 first verifier is provided by a first entity and the second verifier that is provided by  
25 a second entity.

1           **39.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 37, wherein the  
2 first security code and the second security code are the same.

3

4           **40.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 37, wherein the  
5 first security code is provided by a first entity and the second security code is  
6 provided by a second entity.

7

8           **41.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 22, wherein  
9 verifying that the first application is authorized to set the initial range for the  
10 controlled parameter setting further includes using at least one verifier selected  
11 from a group comprising at least a first verifier and a second verifier.

12

13           **42.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 29, wherein  
14 verifying that the first application is authorized to set the initial range for the  
15 controlled parameter setting further includes using at least one verifier selected  
16 from a group comprising at least a first verifier and a second verifier.

17           **43.** A method comprising:  
18                 setting an authorized range and a current value for a controlled parameter;  
19                 receiving a request to change the current value of the controlled parameter  
20 from an application;  
21                 changing the current value of the controlled parameter if a requested value  
22 of the controlled parameter is within the authorized range;  
23                 otherwise, verifying that the application is authorized to modify the  
24 authorized range for the controlled parameter, prior to changing the current value  
25 of the controlled parameter to the requested value.

1  
2       **44.** A method as recited in claim 43, wherein verifying that the  
3 application is authorized to modify the authorized range for the controlled  
4 parameter further comprises changing the authorized range to include the  
5 requested value when the application is authorized to modify the authorized range.

6  
7       **45.** A method as recited in claim 44, wherein the authorized range  
8 includes at least one authorized limit selected from a group including a minimum  
9 authorized limit and a maximum authorized limit.

10  
11      **46.** A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising changing the  
12 current value of the controlled parameter to the minimum authorized limit if the  
13 requested value is less than the minimum authorized limit and the application is  
14 not authorized to modify the authorized range.

15  
16      **47.** A method as recited in claim 45, further comprising changing the  
17 current value of the controlled parameter to the maximum authorized limit if the  
18 requested value is more than the maximum authorized limit and the application is  
19 not authorized to modify the authorized range.

20  
21      **48.** A computer-readable medium having computer-executable  
22 instructions for performing steps comprising:  
23             setting an authorized range and a current value for a controlled parameter;  
24             receiving a request to change the current value of the controlled parameter  
25 from an application;

1 changing the current value of the controlled parameter if a requested value  
2 of the controlled parameter is within the authorized range;

3 otherwise, verifying that the application is authorized to modify the  
4 authorized range for the controlled parameter, prior to changing the current value  
5 of the controlled parameter to the requested value.

6

7       **49.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 48, wherein  
8 verifying that the application is authorized to modify the authorized range for the  
9 controlled parameter further comprises changing the authorized range to include  
10 the requested value when the application is authorized to modify the authorized  
11 range.

12

13       **50.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 49, wherein the  
14 authorized range includes at least one authorized limit selected from a group  
15 including a minimum authorized limit and a maximum authorized limit.

16

17       **51.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 50, further  
18 comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the step of changing  
19 the current value of the controlled parameter to the minimum authorized limit if  
20 the requested value is less than the minimum authorized limit and the application  
21 is not authorized to modify the authorized range.

1           **52.** A computer-readable medium as recited in claim 50, further  
2 comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the step of changing  
3 the current value of the controlled parameter to the maximum authorized limit if  
4 the requested value is more than the maximum authorized limit and the application  
5 is not authorized to modify the authorized range.

6  
7           **53.** A system comprising:

8           at least one processor operatively configured to respond to computer  
9 instructions associated with a plurality of applications, including a first  
10 application;

11           memory coupled to the processor and configured to store data associated  
12 with at least the first application, and

13           a program operatively configured within the processor and memory and  
14 arranged to set a parameter value and a range associated with at least one  
15 controlled parameter, determine if the first application is authorized to modify the  
16 range, modify the parameter value within the range when requested by the first  
17 application, and modify the parameter value outside the range and modify the  
18 range when requested by the first application if the first application is authorized  
19 to modify the range.

20  
21           **54.** A system as recited in claim 53, wherein the program determines if  
22 the first application is authorized to modify the range by analyzing a security code  
23 provided by the first application.

1           **55.** A system as recited in claim 54, wherein the program decodes the  
2 security code and compares the resulting data to predetermined data to determine  
3 if the first application is authorized to modify the range.

4

5           **56.** A system as recited in claim 54, wherein the program determines  
6 that the first application is authorized to change the range only if the security code  
7 matches a valid security code.

8

9           **57.** A system as recited in claim 54, wherein the program further  
10 includes at least one linked verifier function stored within a predefined portion of  
11 the memory, and the program is configured to determine if the linked verifier  
12 function, as called by the program, is not within the predefined portion of the  
13 memory, in which case, the program determines that the first application is  
14 unauthorized to modify the range.

15

16           **58.** A system as recited in claim 57, wherein the predefined memory  
17 location is within a read only portion of the memory.

18

19           **59.** A system as recited in claim 54, wherein the security code is  
20 uniquely associated a software developer entity responsible for providing the first  
21 application.

1           **60.** A system as recited in claim 53, wherein the processor is operatively  
2 configured to respond to computer instructions associated with at least a second  
3 application, and the program is further configured to determine if the second  
4 application is authorized to modify the range, modify the parameter value within  
5 the range when requested by the second application, and modify the parameter  
6 value outside the range and modify the range when requested by the first  
7 application if the first application is authorized to modify the range.

8

9           **61.** A system as recited in claim 53 wherein the parameter is selected  
10 from a group comprising an audio volume control parameter, an audio tone control  
11 parameter, an illumination control parameter, a visual display control parameter, a  
12 temperature control parameter, a communication access control parameter, a  
13 peripheral device control parameter, a vehicle control parameter, and an  
14 environment control parameter.

15

16           **62.** A system as recited in claim 53, wherein the processor, the memory,  
17 and the program are part of a computer system within a vehicle.

18

19           **63.** A system as recited in claim 53, further comprising at least one  
20 device that is coupled to the program and is responsive to the parameter value  
21 from the program.

1           64. An arrangement for use in a computer system, the arrangement  
2 comprising:

3           a parameter manager configurable to receive a parameter change request  
4 from one or more computer applications and selectively output a corresponding  
5 parameter value;

6           at least one verifier function accessible by the parameter manager and  
7 configured to determine if the parameter change request is from a computer  
8 application that is authorized to exceed a parameter limitation; and

9           a device driver coupled to the parameter manager and configured to receive  
10 the parameter value from the parameter manager and output a corresponding  
11 control parameter suitable for use by at least one device.

12  
13           65. An arrangement as recited in claim 64, wherein the verifier  
14 determines if the parameter change request is from the computer application  
15 authorized to exceed the parameter limitation by analyzing a security code  
16 identified by the first application.

17  
18           66. An arrangement as recited in claim 65, wherein the verifier decodes  
19 the security code and compares the resulting data to a valid security code to  
20 determine if the computer application is authorized to exceed the parameter  
21 limitation.

1           67. An arrangement as recited in claim 65, wherein at least a portion of  
2 the verifier is invoked by the parameter manager in a predefined, identifiable  
3 manner, such that if invoked otherwise the computer application is deemed  
4 unauthorized to exceed the parameter limitation.

5  
6           68. An arrangement as recited in claim 67, further comprising a  
7 memory, and wherein the at least a portion of the verifier that is invoked by the  
8 parameter manager in a predefined, identifiable manner is associated with at least  
9 one memory location within a read only portion of the memory.

10  
11          69. An arrangement system as recited in claim 64, wherein the security  
12 code is uniquely associated a software developer entity responsible for providing  
13 the computer application and the verifier.

14  
15          70. An arrangement as recited in claim 64, wherein the parameter  
16 manager, verifier, and device driver are part of a computer system within a  
17 vehicle.

18  
19          71. An arrangement as recited in claim 64, wherein the at least one  
20 device includes a computer implemented function.